



Date: March 17, 2020

To: SOAZ athletes, volunteers, families, and friends

From: Jamie Heckerman, CEO

Subject: Cancellation of spring season competition & events through May 31, 2020

After careful discussion and review of new developments regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), Special Olympics Arizona has made the difficult decision to **cancel all spring season sports training (practices), area & state competitions (including Summer Games), fundraising events, and other activations through May 31, 2020.** This includes the following events:

- **Guardian Games is postponed and may still be held later in the year**
- **Summer Games is canceled (The extreme heat we will experience does not allow us to postpone Summer Games)**

Along with the decision to cancel area & state competitions, all sports practices and other Special Olympics Arizona gatherings are suspended until May 15, 2020, at which time we will reevaluate and send an update via email. We are continuing to monitor the situation on a day-by-day basis & we are consulting with public health officials from our local state department for further direction. We will provide ongoing updates as more information becomes available.

While canceling events is disappointing for athletes who have trained and practiced to compete, we know that our love of sport does not compare to the importance of protecting the health of our athletes and the entire Special Olympics Arizona community. This difficult decision was made carefully based on new developments and advice from Special Olympics International and their consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

[Please refer to this page of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention website for all tips](#) or review the attached FAQ document from the [Maricopa County Department of Health](#). Please continue to practice smart and careful prevention strategies. Wash your hands often, use hand sanitizer, avoid high-fives and handshakes, and avoid contact with your face. If you do not feel well, please stay at home to protect yourself & others.

Below are some resources and activities that have been put together for our community to access during this trying time:

- **eLearning Course:** With the help of athletes and Program Staff, a 30-minute eLearning course has been developed for our Special Olympics community about COVID-19. This course is designed to cover the basic information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) including: what is the coronavirus, what are the symptoms, how does it spread, and how you can protect yourself. We encourage the entire Special Olympics community to complete this module at learn.specialolympics.org Please see [instructions](#) for accessing this course.
- **Young Athletes**
 - [Family Flash Cards](#). Fun and engaging flashcards featuring each of the individual activities and at home equipment modifications for families to use at home to run Young Athletes.
 - [Young Athletes At Home](#). Guide for families and caregivers on how to run Young Athletes activities at home.
 - [Young Athletes Videos](#). Videos demonstrating the individual Young Athletes activities.
 - [Healthy Play at Home](#). Poster for families to track the various healthy behaviors they do at home.
 - Tips for talking to children about Coronavirus 2019 from [CDC](#) and [UNICEF](#).



- **Fitness**

- [Fit 5 Resources Series](#)

- **Fit 5 Guide:** Educational guide and tracker for athletes to focus on fitness.
- **Fitness Cards:** A series of leveled exercises in endurance, strength and flexibility. These cards can be done at home and with little equipment.
- **Fitness Videos:** Videos portraying the exercises in the fitness cards. Athletes can follow along with the videos to get a great workout!

- [Staying Fit at Home](#): simple week-long calendar that athletes can follow to stay fit. Week-long calendar can be repeated as needed. Athletes can sign up on the link in the resource to receive newsletter with content from Health Messengers to for tips and ideas on how to stay active.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. This is uncharted territory and we appreciate your support as we work to make the best decisions for our athletes and everyone in the SOAZ community.

Stay safe,

Jamie Heckerman
President & CEO
Special Olympics Arizona